

116th IBCT more combat ready after XCTC rotation

Virginia and Kentucky National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and enabler units from Guard units in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana and New York honed their combat skills during eXportable Combat Training Capability Rotation 19-4 July 13-Aug. 2, 2019, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Col. Joseph A. DiNonno, commander of the 116th IBCT, said he was incredibly proud of the outstanding effort and resilience demonstrated by Soldiers across the brigade. The XCTC rotation provided tough, realistic training scenarios to prepare them for combat, and it has proven to be a valuable and challenging experience, he said.

“The 116th IBCT is a more combat-ready unit as a result of this training, and we are better prepared to face the challenges we could see in an overseas deployment,” DiNonno said. “On behalf of the entire brigade leadership team, I want to thank each and every Soldier for what they accomplished at XCTC, and I also want to thank their families and employers for their support that is so critical to our being able to conduct our mission.”

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/08/06/13837/>



Soldiers assigned to the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conduct defensive operations July 29, 2019, during Combat Training Capability Rotation 19-4 at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

1945th Contracting Team Soldiers recognized by Norfolk Naval Shipyard

Two Virginia National Guard Soldiers currently on federal active duty overseas providing contract support received months of required real-world experience with the Norfolk Naval Shipyard prior to their deployment, and they were recognized for their outstanding service in May 2019.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/08/06/13845/>

Partnerships offer ChalleNGe cadets new options upon graduation

Two new programs offer Commonwealth ChalleNGe cadets the opportunity to quickly receive their GED certificate and then spend eight to 10 weeks taking college classes or training for a future career in the building industry.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/25/13814/>

Ceremony recognizes dedicated crew chiefs

Eleven Airmen from the 192nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron were appointed as dedicated crew chiefs during a ceremony July 14, 2019, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/07/26/13885/>

Recruit Sustainment Program produces greater success rate for new recruits

More than 70 newly-recruited Soldiers participated in a combined training event as part of the Virginia National Guard's Recruit Sustainment Program July 20, 2019, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/08/06/13862/>

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VDF chaplains provide support at Fort Pickett chapel

Virginia Defense Force chaplains are volunteering their time to conduct Sunday services at the Fort Pickett Bulla Chapel through the summer to provide religious support to Soldiers conducting training on the installation. The partnership between the Virginia National Guard Chaplain Corps and the VDF Chaplain Corps opens the chapel every Sunday from June 2 through Aug. 25, 2019.

"The partnership activities between the VDF, the chaplains in the Virginia Army National Guard and transient training units have proven to be a force multiplier during the annual training periods in 2019," said Col. Paul Gravely, Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett garrison commander. It has especially been important during the two eXportatable Combat Training Capability rotations for the Virginia's 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the Pennsylvania Guard's 2nd Brigade, 28th Infantry Division. I am extremely proud that the Army and VDF chaplains have been able to provide a level of support not previously available at the installation."

Coordination for the support involved senior chaplains at the Joint Force Headquarters-Virginia, Virginia Army National Guard and 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the Virginia Defense Force.

"This is a true win for the organization," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ben Sprouse, the VNG state chaplain.

"The religious support collaboration between our VDF Chaplains and Virginia National Guard chaplains is positively impacting Soldiers during a very busy annual training season at Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett," said Chaplain (Maj.) Brett L. Johnson, Virginia Army National Guard full-time support chaplain.

"Over the last several years, the Virginia National Guard Chaplain Corps has been understrength and as a result it became challenging to provide religious support at Fort Pickett during the apex of the annual training season," explained Chaplain (Maj.) Jonathan Goldwire, brigade chaplain for the 116th IBCT and project officer for the VNG/VDF chaplain collaboration.

Goldwire said that a formal agreement between the VNG senior chaplains and senior VDF Chaplain (Lt. Col. (Va.)) David Lagerveld in early May opened the doors of Bulla Chapel, and the chaplains all met prior to the start of services to address any questions and set the schedule for the summer.

"With religious support being provided by a number of highly-qualified and well-trained VDF chaplains, civilians and Soldiers alike have been taking advantage of the religious service being offered," Goldwire said. "A number of chaplains from visiting units have expressed gratitude and appreciation for having a regularly scheduled service for their Soldiers to attend during annual training. Not only is the partnership benefiting the Virginia National Guard, but it also provides a great experience and opportunity for the VDF to serve the commonwealth in a different way."

The experience for the VDF chaplains has been very positive.



Virginia Defense Force Chaplain (Capt. (Va.)) Chris McKeon conducts a Sunday chapel service July 15, 2019, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

In several situations, National Guard chaplains for units outside of Virginia either asked the VDF chaplains to conduct the Sunday service or they conducted the service together.

"I knew from the beginning that this project was going to be rewarding, but we honestly had no idea of the level of ministry that we would be providing to so many Soldiers," Lagerveld said. "We are also experiencing a very high level of respect and acceptance from all the Soldiers who are attending, and this has become a great opportunity for our chaplains and for the VDF."

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/08/02/13823/>

MORE ON THE WEB

VDF Life Saving Medal presented at SMR

<https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/08/04/13834/>

Photos: 116th IBCT XCTC 19-04 Highlights

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157709743813976>

Photos: ChalleNGe conducts July awards ceremony

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Photos: Atlee HS footballers build teamwork at Fort Pickett

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Photos: ChalleNGe cadets show off moves at Family Day

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